DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 478 287 FL 027 738

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TITLE	"Communicative Lingerings": An Exploratory Study of the Emergence of "Foreign" Communicative Features in the Interactions of American Expatriates after Reentry.
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	28p.; In: Working Papers in Educational Linguistics, 2003; see FL 027 736.
PUB TYPE	Journal Articles (080) -- Reports - Research (143)
JOURNAL CIT	Working Papers in Educational Linguistics; v18 n2 p27-53 2003
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Acculturation; *Communication Skills; *Cultural Differences; Ethnography; Foreign Countries; Interpersonal Communication; Interviews; *Language Usage; Second Language Learning
IDENTIFIERS	*Language Contact; Repatriation

ABSTRACT

This study identified ways that experiences living abroad affected Americans' communicative behavior upon repatriation. Participants were seven adult re-entrants who had lived abroad for at least 1 year and had recently returned to the United States. Five were English teachers, and three had worked in other areas of social service and development. Six were European Americans, and one was Arab American. Language proficiency ranged from being fluent in two or three language varieties and conversant in others, to being minimally functional in the host country's language but only truly comfortable in standard American English. Data from ethnographic interviews provided information on three common areas in which communicative behaviors and perceptions learned abroad continued to manifest themselves after re-entry: linguistic/paralinguistic lingerings (uttering a phrase in the host country's language without realizing it); expectations for interaction: interactional lingerings (common recognitions regarding changes in interpersonal behavior that appeared connected to issues of physical and social distance); and perceptive lingerings (feeling overwhelmed back home in certain environments). The paper provides examples of these areas, noting reasons for their occurrence (emotional state, level of acculturation achieved abroad, appreciation for the host country and culture, and sequencing of experiences). (SM)

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"Communicative Lingerings": An Exploratory Study of the Emergence of 'Foreign' Communicative Features in the Interactions of American Expatriates after Reentry

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This study attempts to identify ways that experiences living abroad have affected Americans' communicative behavior upon repatriation. These residual effects of learning the language and culture of the host country are called "Communicative Lingerings." Three general categories of lingerings are found: Linguistic/paralinguistic lingerings, interactional lingerings and perceptual lingerings. Reasons for these occurrences, and their possible connection to levels of acculturation, are also explored.

Introduction

Example A

Ken: "You've improved; you're dancing really well tonight."
Laura: "Well, I don't know, but if that were the case I'd be happy."

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When I heard this reply come out of my own mouth in a dance class last December, my first thought was, "Where did that come from? What an awkward thing to say!" A split second later I realized it was a direct translation from a Japanese phrase I had learned: *Ja, shiranai kedo, soo dattara ureshii to omoimasu.* Many perfectly acceptable English responses existed (e.g. "Thanks," or "I wish!") but I had learned that the Japanese "don't say it that way," and had thus learned "the right way" to reject or denigrate compliments (Chen 1993). After two years in Japan, I seemed to have accepted this different approach, and the change lingered even though I was back in my home country among native English-speaking peers. I'd been back in the US for four months, yet this kind of utterance and other unintentional, Japanese-tinted responses and behaviors kept surfacing, surprising me each time. Was I

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the only person with such odd experiences or was it a common occurrence among people who had lived abroad for extended periods of time? Were there other ways in which communicative features learned abroad subconsciously manifested themselves in the behavior of these people even after returning home? If so, why? And most importantly, what does this imply about language learning and cross-cultural interaction?

The topic of reverse culture shock has become a very common, casual one. This label itself implies that re-entrants do indeed have difficulties of one sort or another when trying to readjust to life back home. Considering my own experiences (returning home in the summer of 2001 after two years as a high school teacher in Japan, as well as after a year as an exchange student at a Japanese university in 1993) I had made several observations. Predominantly the dichotomy between what I had been "raised" to do versus what I was "taught" to do later in life seemed to be an outstanding factor.

Many studies strive to account for cross-cultural miscommunication and L2 adjustment difficulties as a result of different cultural ways of responding to various situations, such as how to respond to compliments, politely disagree with someone's idea, or use body language to nonverbally convey a message (e.g. Billmyer 1990). We are raised to behave in certain ways. I propose that we do not recognize, consider, or question most of our "natural" behavioral patterns; we continue them "because that's the way I've always done it." We are not able to explicitly define each and every act. In contrast, when going to a foreign country or learning to work with a different language and/or culture, many of these habits are suddenly considered inappropriate. At that point, someone (often within the target culture) explicitly identifies a situation where a particular behavior is (or is not) called for, raising our sociopragmatic awareness (Thomas 1983). Subsequently they deliberately teach us "the correct way" to respond, verbally or non-verbally, raising our pragmalinguistic awareness (Thomas 1983). This new understanding is then mentally and emotionally processed, and practiced until it becomes "second nature."

As I reflected on the problem, I concluded that it appears to arise upon return to the home culture or language for two reasons. First, the newly learned behavior has become automatic, and possibly even "replaced" the original method as comfortable reflex. Second and more complicated is that although we may be aware of what we learned abroad, the original "home" behavior was never explicitly recognized prior to the change, so we are unable to define the exact parameters of what was "left behind," and thus are unable to remember how to return there.

Re-entrants, adult professionals who have lived and worked abroad for extended periods of time before returning to live and work in the US, are an almost unrecognized cultural minority with their own set of doubts and questions about self- and group- identity. They leave home as

"Americans" and return home again months or years later expecting to be "Americans," but somehow they don't seem to fully "know how," reflecting the aforementioned confusion. There is suddenly sporadic confusion about how to recognize and interpret sociopragmatic conditions. Within these contexts, pragmalinguistic knowledge may also occasionally be uncertain, as interlocutors search for the appropriate linguistic form that would function in such a way as to accomplish a certain communicative goal. de Bot refers to a lexical version of this frustration as "the 'tip-of-the-tongue' phenomenon, where speakers cannot find the right word form although they know that they know it" (1996: 542).

Not only is it important to recognize the readjustment needs of these people in their own right, but as educators of language and cultural awareness, perhaps understanding these needs and why they occur will lend insight into how to better teach these aspects of sociolinguistic competence to English language learners in our classrooms. There appears to be a large gap in the literature on the learned communicative habits acquired abroad by reentrants, as well as lingerings between multiple second languages within one adult learner. My intent in this research was to find out if other people felt the same sense of confusion upon reentry as I did, and if other possible explanations became evident.

Background

There is myriad research on issues related to second language acquisition and cross-cultural communication, ranging from code switching and both L1 and L2 transfer or interference, to the concepts of "face" (e.g. Brown & Levinson 1987) and culture shock. There appear to be five generally related themes in the research, yet none of them has the combination of features to address the unique linguistic situation of these reentrants.

First, regarding cultural issues, there are many psychological studies that focus on the culture shock of returning from abroad, also known as reverse culture shock or reentry adjustment, but their primary focal groups tend to be exchange students returning to their home campuses (e.g. Gaw 1995; Hogan 1996), corporate executives returning to the home office (e.g. Adler 1981; Martin & Anthony 2002), missionary families (e.g. Pollock 2002), or military people returning to a domestic base, and their respective conditions. The focus is primarily on general cultural readjustment, rather than on specific linguistic behavior.

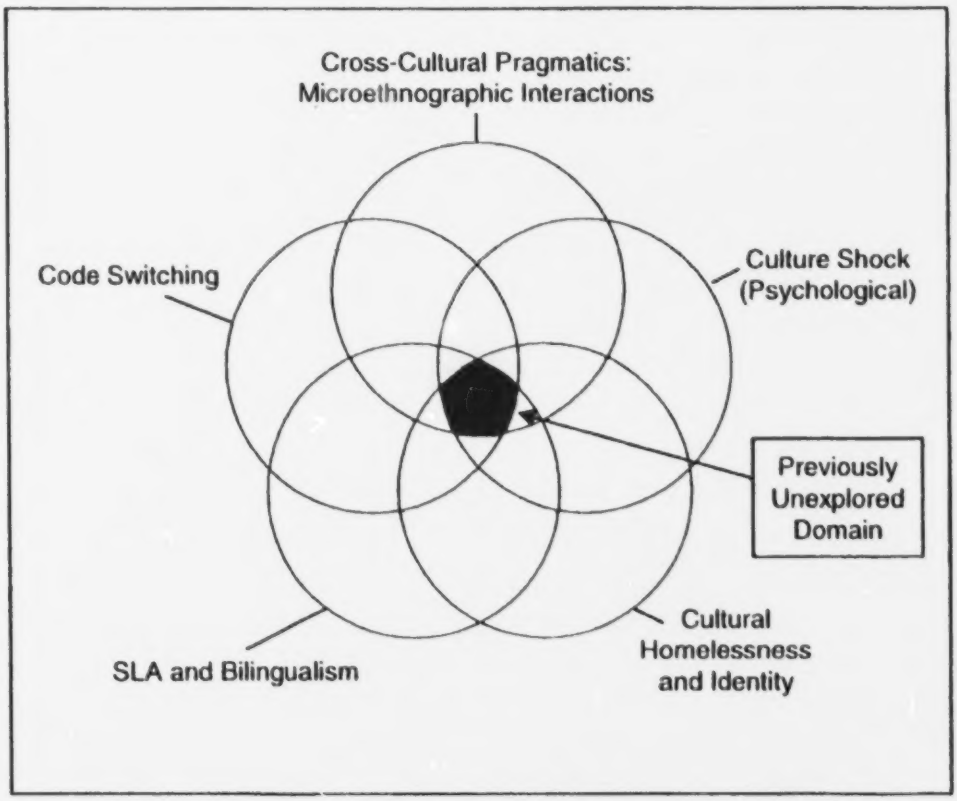
The second group of studies is on the notion of "cultural homelessness" or "third culture kids (TCKs)" These tend to look at children (such as those with parents in military service) who frequently relocate, often internationally (e.g. Pollock 2002), or multi-ethnic people who are unable to identify fully with any one group of people and thus always feel like

outsiders (e.g. Navarete-Vivero & Jenkins 1999).

Linguistically, the third area of interest is code switching. However, these researchers mainly approach the subject from perspectives of grammar, language choice and identity of bilinguals (e.g. Matsuda 2000; Nishimura 1997), or types of code switching (inter/intra-sentential, mutually intelligible/unintelligible, etc.) thereof (e.g. Martin-Jones 1995; Pfaff 1979; Yoon 1992).

The fourth group of studies are related to second language acquisition (SLA) and bilingualism, with linguistic foci on language attrition and rejuvenation (de Bot & Stoessel 2000) and interference (e.g. Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz 1990; Poulisse & Bongaerts 1994), both L1 and L2. These studies predominantly looked at immigrant populations or bilingual programs in schools. Similarly, there is a large body of research on implications of L1 and L2 attrition or underdevelopment that focuses not so much on SLA practices, but on language policy, practice opportunities, and motivation (e.g. Hornberger 1988; 1991; Freeman 2000).

Figure 1
Relationship Between Re-Entrants' Language Experience and Major Fields of Research



Finally, there are many studies that focus on the cross-cultural pragmatics of microethnographic interactions, analyzing miscommunications

and expectations in specific speech acts and events such as apologies, requests, and compliments (e.g. Chick 1996; Billmyer 1990).

At best, each focal area has tangential relation to this situation in question and some connection to the other areas, but there appears to be a significant gap in the literature regarding the microcosm of language and culture among re-entrants, tying all of these areas together (see Figure 1). I hope that this paper will convince researchers of the legitimacy of the need to fill this gap.

Methods

In order to narrow the scope of this study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Upon repatriation, do re-entrants catch themselves unintentionally displaying "foreign" communicative behaviors, either verbal or non-verbal? If so, what are they? What are the re-entrants' beliefs about why this seems to happen?
2. Similarly, do these re-entrants ever perceive other people's displays of "home culture" communication style to be strange? What are the re-entrants' beliefs about why this seems to happen?
3. Most importantly, are there any emergent patterns visible in their reported experiences?

My participants were seven (counting myself) adult re-entrants who had lived overseas for a year or longer, but had only returned to live and work "at home" again within the past 12 months. Five were English teachers and three worked in other areas of social service and development (one had two jobs). Six were European Americans, and one was Arab American. The earliest re-entry date was in May, 2001, and the latest was in December, 2001. Language proficiency ranged from being fluent in two or three language varieties and conversant in others, to minimally functional in the host-country's language but only truly comfortable in standard American English. Although all were initially excited about the impending overseas assignments prior to going, and in retrospect considered the experience to be invaluable, the degree to which participants truly enjoyed the experience or looked forward to returning home varied considerably. (See Appendix A for brief profiles of participants.) All interviews were conducted in March, 2002. Three participants were interviewed in person, allowing for transcription, while the other three were primarily contacted over the telephone due to geographic distance. Follow-up conversations were held with all participants as well, mainly on the telephone.

The best way to answer the research questions, at least initially, appeared to be a type of ethnographic interview. For my own data contribution, I wrote down 'foreign-tinted' communicative behaviors I have noticed in myself, or that others have pointed out to me. I also asked sev-

eral people who have known me for a long time (e.g. my mother) if they had noticed anything different in my speech or behavior after returning from Japan on either occasion (1994 or 2001).

After writing down and looking at my own self-observations, I developed a very loosely structured set of questions for the other participants regarding their speech anomalies, behaviors and perceptions of their home environment. Aside from general data regarding language proficiency, what countries they'd been to and for how long, etc., some of the questions I had planned to ask were along the lines of:

How has repatriation been difficult for you?
What has been difficult for you to culturally adapt to upon return?
Have you found any (foreign language) accidentally slipping into your English?
Has anyone else pointed out something you did or said that was "left over" from your time abroad?
Have you had any experiences interacting with an American where you thought their speech or behavior was strange, but probably wouldn't have noticed it had you not lived abroad?
Why do you think this happens?

However, as interviews progressed, some of the questions were modified in the following ways:

Since coming back, have you caught yourself falling into speech patterns of the other language(s)?
Have you caught yourself speaking English but in a (non-English) way?
In what situations do you find (non-English) words coming out?
Have you noticed anything in your behavior that's still (foreign country) style?

Many of the questions I actually used were not so topically clear, independently. As interviewees narrated, I would occasionally interrupt and ask them to focus on one aspect and give me more detail, for example, "What kind of impulse was it?"

I did not want to be too detailed in my questions or give examples in the beginning for fear of restricting the input of the speakers, potentially convincing them to ignore or otherwise overlook other types of examples that would have been pertinent. As the topic and research questions were very metacognitive and metalinguistic in nature, I had to allow for the fact that respondents probably had not given them much – if any – thought before. When setting up the interview time, I sent an e-mail to everyone letting them know the general topic and types of information I was looking for, thus ideally giving them time to reflect on their experi-

ences. During the interviews, I allowed significant tangential storytelling, hoping it would jog their memories and otherwise help the informants make connections and recollections for themselves. Depending on how they responded to my initial questions, subsequent ones often strayed from the list as they brought new and different ideas to light.

Standardizing the questions was difficult, mainly because no matter how clear and concise I thought they were, respondents inevitably interpreted them differently from how I had originally intended, and rarely were they interpreted the same way twice. Upon noting what prompt a participant needed to understand what I was truly looking for, I would try to use that approach with the next participant, but inevitably the same round-about discussion would ensue until we understood each other better. Natural, conversational interviewing seemed to facilitate this better than a formalized list of exact questions.

I should address one commonly held concern about the merits of self-reported speech data. As Blom and Gumperz (1972), among others, illustrated in their study of Norwegian bilinguals, native speakers are often unaware of their own speech patterns. Thus, people's reports on what they tend to do is often unreliable. Wolfson also argues that native speakers lack the intuition to recognize their own speech behaviors because "sociolinguistic rules are largely below the level of conscious awareness" (1983: 83). This has been well documented.

However, I would contend that what makes this study different is that the participants are not being asked to evaluate their own behavioral styles or report what they think they usually do. On the contrary, they are recounting experiences that were completely out of the ordinary for them, without any sort of immediately recognized pattern, except for the fact that they generally believed these anomalies were residual effects of their time abroad. It is specifically the "where did that come from?" nature of the occurrences that made them salient enough to be noticed and remembered in the first place.

Swain has done extensive research demonstrating the value of output in SLA specifically because, among other things, it facilitates "noticing." Unlike Wolfson's complaint that many language features are "below the level of conscious awareness" as mentioned above, the unexpected nature and sudden recognition of language gaps or accidental interference is what brings these events immediately to the conscious level. Swain explains that the act of noticing "may trigger cognitive processes which might generate linguistic knowledge that is new for the learner, or that consolidates their existing knowledge" (1998: 67). As I demonstrated by the exchange I had with my dance partner in the opening lines of this paper, as soon as the words were out of my mouth, I realized something wasn't quite right, and on reflex assessed the situation to try to figure out what had happened.

As a result of the relative infrequency and sporadic nature of the experiences, plus the fact that not all pertinent examples manifest themselves out loud, it would prove difficult to set up a quantifiable or even ethnographic means of observing them first hand. In the discussion section of this paper, I will address how this matter could more formally be handled for future follow-up studies.

Results

Data collected indicate three common areas in which communicative behaviors and perceptions learned abroad have continued to manifest themselves after re-entry. I have chosen to call these residual behaviors "communicative lingerings." The general areas emerging from the data are (I) linguistic/paralinguistic features ("linguistic/paralinguistic lingerings"), (II) expectations for interactions ("interactional lingerings"), and (III) psychological perceptions of a situation ("perceptual lingerings"). It is these residual reflexes and impulses on which I will focus.

I. Linguistic/paralinguistic Lingerings

I.1. Almost every returnee admitted to having uttered a phrase in the language of the host country without realizing the switch until after actually hearing it. "I do it fairly frequently, at least several times a month." "Oh, yeah, that happens constantly with me." These were two comments made by Bob and Father James, respectively. Father James continued,

Example B

> "The other night at dinner we were sitting there talking about something and I wanted to say 'why' to this other friar, and instead of saying why I said *blungwunum*. And you know, I didn't even, it didn't even hit me until after I said it."

Of the foreign language lexical items that were unintentionally uttered in English language exchanges, I identified four categories: (i) intensifiers, (ii) set phrases, (iii) emotional expressions, and (iv) backchanneling (see chart in Appendix B: Lexical Lingerings). (Note: whether or not these translations are truly accurate is not the issue. What is important is that these are the meanings assigned to the words by the speakers, indicating the intentions of the utterance.) Other non-lexical communicative features were also affected such as (1) body language and (2) thought organization.

I.1.i. Intensifiers used commonly were equivalent to "very" or "really," and were reported as being inserted in various positions in the English sentence, such as before an adjective as would be appropriate in English syntax, or at the end of a sentence, perhaps to conform to the constraints

found in the language from which the word itself came (e.g. Nishimura 1997). Bob recalled a situation in which he was talking to his sister (who lives in Kansas and doesn't speak any Arabic or have any ties to the culture):

Example C

B: Aaand, talking about travel plans to Thailand, and my rush to get ready, and how stupid I was to have agreed to go on a trip the last day of term when all papers, all the last round of papers had to be corrected, grades had to be turned in, and get to the airport by five o'clock, and, as I got more intense about that, some Arabic started popping out.

L: What popped out?

B: Uh, it, it's, it's almost always the same thing. Words like *'awwi'* which means 'very' and I said 'That was very stupid *awwi*,' to do that.

I.1.ii. Set phrases were utterances that are commonly accepted as complete responses to a prompt. This group also had two subsets: those with direct English correlations and those with no fitting English equivalent. The former include direct translations of words or multi-word phrases such as "yes," "no," "good morning," "I don't know," or "a beer." Susan described an interaction during her family's relocation back to the US from Mexico:

Example D

S: In restaurants, when you order food, I don't know why but you have, for example I was sitting with my family, when we drove up here we drove from Monterey Mexico all the way to Philadelphia with a truck full of crap and junk and stuff. So we stopped in a diner in Louisiana and I remember we would say, "Um, una *cerveza*--I mean a beer." Or would say "sí" or "no." I think just because when you give orders to someone in Mexico in a restaurant it just seemed to be natural, ordering food in a restaurant in Spanish, that seemed so natural. Because when we traveled all around Mexico we always use Spanish at a restaurant, even though around the table I'd be speaking English to Sophie or my husband, then you turn and speak Spanish.

L: So you got used to assigning roles, in a sense. Like a language role with an identity, you'd use one for your family and when you turn ...

S: Spanish, right, exactly.

Set phrases with no English equivalent are naturally more difficult to describe. Examples include "*Hodi*" in Swahili, which is used upon arrival at someone's house, announcing the arrival and intent to enter the house. Linda explained that although she never actually uttered it, for a while after returning to New York, every time she approached someone's door, she felt the urge to call,

Example E

> "*Hodi! Hodi! Hodi!* which is like, hey, I'm here, I'm coming in!"

Father James described his unintentionally picking up a Kewa term of endearment:

Example F

> "And, and another thing, they would, uh, as a sign of affection, the older people especially would come up to me and hug me and say '*ah abunanagio, abunanagio*', and it means my little son. You know, my little son. And so, uh, I found myself saying that to, you know, people, (here) or in situations, because it was such a sign of affection, really."

Another is the Arabic response "*inshala*," which means "God willing," but is often used to indicate uncertainty regarding whether something will take place, or to reduce pressures of responsibility. Susan explained that common exchanges with her students in the UAE such as the one below brought these words into her habitual language repertoire:

Example G

> "I'd tell my students 'have this essay ready by tomorrow, okay? – 'Oh, *inshala* teacher, *inshala*.' And it's like no, not *inshala*, have it done."

1.iii. The third type of code-switched utterance was emotional expression. While these expressions could potentially be used in larger sentences, they all were described in contexts where they independently comprised the full utterance. For example, Linda recalled a Swahili lingering,

Example H

> "When I'm mad at someone, catch phrases some out, like when I'm driving I said *Dawa*na! Which is like 'oh, man! What are you doing!"

"¡*Hijole*!" is a virtual Spanish equivalent for "holy cow!" or "son of a

gun!" that Susan described using as a response to something unexpected. To this day, I continue to say "*Are*?" (Japanese) when I suddenly realize there is a problem, such as remembering a forgotten appointment or digging in my bag for my keys only to realize they're not there. It's as if I were saying to myself, "Hold it..." or "what the...?" There is no conversational context for many of these exclamations, as they tended to be a remark-to-self when nobody else was around.

I.1.iv. The fourth type of verbal lingering is backchanneling style. When in conversation with an English-speaking interlocutor, respondents would often backchannel (Schegloff 1982) in ways learned abroad. In conversation with my mother at one point, I hadn't noticed that I had been regularly and frequently saying "*mm; mm*!" in Japanese instead of the comparatively infrequent "yeah," "okay," or "right," until my mother finally interrupted her own story and asked: "What's with the grunts?"

Fr. James and I had the following exchange when I described that experience to him:

Example I

L: And ...(she) would look at me a little funny...

F: OH, okay—

L: ... It's not a word necessarily—

F: Ah—

L: --but it's not what I would have said had I not gone to Japan.

F: That is very true. Very true. I found that is, that is constant with me. Like um, well, oh yeah, the nonverbal communication is constant. I, I've just found, my family is constantly laughing at me for, for the, for instance (laughs) this may sound funny, but like, if uh, they had this way, the old people there, or all the people there, of when something happens that isn't good, or, I don't know how to say it, like if ... you said something and I disagree with it, I'd say "uhhOOOuhhhhh!"... And also their way of laughing...They laugh on this one pitch and then it goes up I don't even know how to approximate it really, but I think that has happened for me on several occasions when I was laughing... Oh absolutely, the nonverbal communication is just constant..."

Similarly, instead of saying, "okay, okay..." Bob informed me that he occasionally uttered the Arabic phrase "*tayib, tayib*." He didn't notice any pattern regarding interlocutor or situation, but instead mused that it

seemed to come out without any particular stimulus. Jordan, who lived in the former British colony of Zimbabwe, noticed that he had picked up the phrase "is it?" in place of "really?" in conversations. A nearly universal difference between English and the other languages discussed is that instead of the common English response, "oh," many languages use "ah." Many of the participants (myself included) found this lingering in their speech. I still catch myself saying it occasionally, even though now I've been back for over a year and a half.

An oft-discussed topic among Japanese is their habit of sucking air through their teeth when deeply considering something, or to indicate disagreement or disapproval, a habit which I picked up while there and still have not overcome. I use it infrequently, once every month or two at best, usually if I'm trying to figure out how to tactfully disagree or correct someone. I notice it when it slides into my interactions because it still sounds as strange to me now as it did the first time I heard it, even though now it's coming from my own mouth.

2. Speech style and organizational pattern changes were also noted. Father James described his new speech style as "simplifying, always." As the Pidgin dialect on Papua New Guinea has only about 2000 words,

Example J

> "there was always the effort at simplification... I was always having to translate my thoughts into the most simple, basic form, and I think that has lingered."

Akin to my "dancing" example (A) at the beginning of this report, he admitted that he often now says "Sorry, sorry," when hearing bad news, because the literal translation in Kewa was regularly used in Papua New Guinea. He acknowledged that he used to consider Americans' sympathetic use of the word "sorry" to be inappropriate and condescending, and still does, yet now has found himself using it inadvertently as a result of L2 interference.

Gestures and other paralinguistic cues also seem to linger on occasion, presumably because they "match" with a word or idea. Postures when standing or sitting are occasionally different, as was the angle at which I have caught myself cocking my head when pondering something confusing. In the first month or so after repatriation, I had to explain myself to American interlocutors a few times after receiving quizzical looks (and occasional outright laughter) whenever I pointed to my nose, as I had learned to do in Japan, instead of touching my heart/sternum, to imply, "who, me?" in conversation, as we do in the US. Father James summarized his feelings on these paralinguistic differences succinctly, saying "there's just a shock about coming back to the States."

Equally noteworthy is that several respondents said that although these "foreign" speech and behavioral patterns don't always outwardly

manifest themselves, the first mental response is not English or a standard "American" mannerism. They report a reflex "urge" to speak or behave in the new way, but "suppress" it upon realizing that it is not appropriate in their current environment. (Examples will be seen in sections below.)

The participants themselves claimed that these unintended utterances "stuck" because they were "mechanical," "throw-away," "inserts," "automatic," "memorized," "reflex/ive," or "catch phrases."

II. Expectations for Interaction: Interactional Lingerings

Common recognitions regarding changes in interpersonal behavior seemed to be connected to issues of distance, both physical and social. This is particularly true for hugging, kissing, or other physical elements of greetings. As Susan put it,

Example K

> "You go up to someone, you approach them, and you realize you're too close, and you back away...You physically, you feel this 'oop!' and you stop."

Greeting styles were frequently cited as sociopragmatically difficult to re-adjust. Many re-entrants claimed that after living abroad, they had "changed (their) opinion on how Americans greet." For example, Jordan described Zimbabwean greetings as "long and drawn out," whereas in the US, "we don't even go through the motions." Linda echoed this sentiment and added that in Tanzania, "Relationships are deeper... Here relationships feel more superficial. People don't want to take the time to get to know you. There, people wanted to know everything about you."

Casually approaching strangers was also perfectly acceptable while in some other countries, but received negative responses from some Americans later. Susan described an experience in sociopragmatic failure during an encounter at a convenience store in Texas when she noticed a Caucasian couple with a cute baby and began to approach to "coo" at it:

Example L

> "...and acting totally normal, for a Mexican, you know cause that's how I was feeling...I approached the baby of the American couple and I didn't say anything, I just went up and the man got, got pissed. I didn't touch the baby or say anything and I'm a woman I mean and...he looked at me and he said, 'Is something the matter? Is something the matter with my kid, or, what are you doing?' And I realized, whoa, I forgot, you know I'm in the US and you don't approach babies... and it's funny because I was acting like a Mexican doing that."

In contrast, there were also several examples of acclimation to

increased social distance abroad that allowed for emotional reaction upon return home. This was particularly true for participants who had gotten used to language and cultural barriers rather than overcome them. For example, Pat recalled a happy epiphany during his first time eating at Burger King after leaving Japan: "I thought to myself, 'I can ask for ketchup!'" The issue of physically "blending in" or "sticking out" also startled some. Linda, as a blue-eyed, fair-skinned woman in Tanzania, described it as "feel(ing) like, you're a rock star" while abroad:

Example M

> "You feel like you're a rock star. You get used to being stared at. After getting used to being the center of attention all the time, so when you go home it's hard to get used to NOT being stared at."

Similarly, Susan was made very aware of social class distinction abroad, and had positive, subtle emotional responses upon re-entry to realizing these were no longer concerns that needed to severely affect whom she felt allowed to interact with.

III. Perceptive Lingerings

Many returnees, from both developed and developing countries, described feeling "overwhelmed" back home in certain environments. Pat labeled himself as feeling "ADD" (i.e. as if he had Attention Deficit Disorder.) His experience in Japan was in a large, bustling city, but being back in an English speaking environment where he could once again understand everything from signs and piped-in music to nearby discussions had an unexpected effect on him. He described what happened one day upon meeting a friend for coffee at Starbucks, and mused:

Example N

> "I couldn't concentrate on a conversation in a public place because I kept listening to everything around me. It was sensory overload."

Jordan also admitted to now being "easily distracted," describing the feeling as being

Example O

> "...like 4th of July every day with fireworks and things to see."

Linda and Jordan each had spent several years living in New York City and Washington, DC., among other places, and had been very used to city life. Yet now crowds, traffic jams and crowded spaces like shopping malls were all causes for feelings of discomfort, where they previously would not have been noticed, been regarded as common nuisances, or

otherwise would have been considered pleasant stimuli, prior to having lived abroad.

Returnees from lesser developed countries commonly discussed the recognition of abundance here in the US, particularly distinguishing new understandings of necessity versus waste, which Father James described as "unbelievable." People had become "creative with what (they) had" and "environmentally conscious" while abroad. They described a new, conscious awareness of not having to turn off generators at night, and being able to use the telephone, watch television or buy products at any time of the day or year. Linda commented:

Example P

> "The use of the telephone is amazing. You can call anyone, anywhere, at any time."

They marveled at the number and variety of glasses in their own kitchen cabinets and questioned other people's shopping habits. Linda also remarked:

Example Q

> "My mom asked me before Christmas if I was going to buy a new winter coat this year. I just thought, why should I? My old coat still fit and was in perfectly good shape."

Most importantly, they acknowledged that these feelings probably would have been different had they not gone abroad.

Discussion

The lexical lingerings in these discussions seem to merit their own discourse category. They are related to inter- and (less so) intra- sentential code-switching but are missing many of the conditions often associated with code switching. In all cases cited, the participant was talking with an interlocutor who clearly neither spoke the language of the lingering or had any significant experience with the represented culture. In only one example, (D), was there an indicated connection to a change in role, or situational switch (Valdés 1982), when Susan described an episode ordering drinks in the "wrong" language at a restaurant. None of these switches was a deliberate choice, and only (D) was an instance that connoted social identity (c.f. Blom & Gumperz, 1972) or other attempts to emphasize a point. Linda's urge to call "*Hodi!*" as in (E) or Fr. James' use of "*Abunnagio*" (F) as a term of endearment could be viewed as an instance of "borrowing" (e.g. Sridhar & Sridhar 1980) because there is no pragmalinguistic equivalent in English. However, most of the other utterances

reported did not have social or lexical meaning outside the semantic field of English.

One pattern visible in the lexical lingerings reported is that all were independent turns, thus examples of inter-sentential code switching (e.g. Nishimura 1997, Martin-Jones 1995), except for the intensifiers, as in (C). As happened in the Blom and Gumperz (1972) study in Norway, all code switching was subconscious and unintentional. However, unlike the Norway study, my participants noticed the lingerings, whereas the Norwegian students yet did not notice when it happened, denied that they would ever do such a thing, and were shocked to hear the recording of their conversation later. Another possibly important difference is that most of the reentrants in my study had not learned these languages until well into adulthood, after moving to the host country, whereas the Norwegian students had essentially been raised bilingual.

Four recurrent themes emerged regarding possible causes for these lingerings: emotional state, the level of acculturation achieved abroad, appreciation for the host country and culture, and sequencing of experiences. Whereas other studies emphasize the importance of the identity of the interlocutor and/or the identity the speaker wishes to project of himself (e.g. Martin-Jones 1995), this did not seem to play a role for my participants, and if anything would seem counterintuitive, as they were trying to blend back into American lifestyles, and their interlocutors would not understand their lingerings.

Emotional responses to a situation seemed to trigger the most lexical and paralinguistic lingerings. Bob regularly identified his experiences with this as occurring when the topic became more "intense" or "interesting," which caused him to "rush ahead" and become "less careful about choosing words." Many of Susan's uses were linked to "positive" feelings, while Linda offered some negative stimuli such as driving in traffic (as in (H)), that caused lingerings to occur "when I'm mad at someone." Many of my own seem to occur at times of confusion or surprise, e.g. "*Are*?" Fr. James described many occurrences that were emotional reactions, from disagreement to Papua New Guinean style laughter, or "signs of affection." He speculated that

Example R

> "they're just cultural expressions that...go right to the heart. They're emotional responses that are given to some sort of (linguistic or paralinguistic) communication."

Another strong factor influencing different lingerings seemed to be the level of acculturation achieved in the host country, that is the degree to which they started to get used to the new culture and lifestyle there (whether or not they actually liked it). Certain behaviors were described

as ultimately feeling "so natural" by many informants. The new ways "got comfortable" and made re-entrants feel that "you should do that" (e.g. as Susan commented regarding elaborate greetings). Pat explained that some behavioral "decisions aren't based on logic; it's just what feels right." This acculturation can result from many factors, from the need to fill communicative gaps to simply the length of time abroad. Regarding time and effort, after one year abroad, Jordan expressed frustration that he "was finally starting to understand how people think; then I had to pick up and leave." Fr. James expanded on this, discussing his motivation and efforts, having "spent so much time trying to be accepted in another culture," and resulting feelings of "isolation from your own culture." He said,

Example S

> "Four years creates a certain momentum...I became accustomed to communicating (in their way and had) to an extent appropriated (it) to my own way of being."

One issue that seemed to affect the level of acculturation was the degree to which the participants seemed to appreciate various aspects of their experience, professionally, linguistically or culturally and desired to become a part of the local culture while there (for more than simply convenience.) Many SLA researchers have looked at affective factors such as motivation, which ties into this aspect (e.g. Crookes & Schmidt 1991; Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991). The majority of the participants in this study claim to "miss hearing or speaking" the languages, lament having to "resist" certain physical responses, or long to be back in a situation where they "felt like (they were) making a difference," as Jordan did.

Participants seemed in general agreement that they didn't just learn how to go through the motions of the other language and culture, but actually came to like the underlying principles represented. For example, lengthy greeting rituals, which were perceived as tedious by some at first, were considered by multiple respondents to be "so interesting," "so distinct," and "so important." The "affection and love for the people," as Fr. James pointed out, is still credited with affecting thoughts and behaviors, and speaking in the learned language now serves as

Example T

> "a way of retouching base with my lovely experience... (and) sort of a mental and psychological consolation in the transition process."

This is somewhat akin to what Lester called "a personal sense of loss and changed sense of self needing to be mourned" upon repatriation

(2001: abstract). The regret at having to leave a part of themselves behind upon repatriation, and subsequently feeling like one doesn't fit in back home anymore is also related to the condition Navarrete Vivaro and Jenkins (1999) called "cultural homelessness."

The final factor that seemed to play a part in lexical lingerings in particular was related to chronological juxtaposition. This was particularly evident in anecdotes of people who moved between several languages and cultures before returning to an English speaking environment in the US. Bob was the quintessential example of this:

Example U

> "I've switched from country to country... I always tend to use my last language on the next country. So when I was in Ivory Coast I went on vacation to Spain and people would speak Spanish to me and I'd speak Dioula, the language of northwestern Ivory Coast where I was. Then when I went to...Somalia, people would speak to me in Somali or Italian and I would answer them in French. Then I went to Egypt and people would say something to me in Arabic and I'd answer them with the little few words in Italian I'd picked up in Somalia... I just went on a marketing trip to Thailand and it happened very frequently that somebody would speak to me in Thai and I would answer in Arabic."

Susan observed as well that after relocating from the UAE to Mexico, she occasionally inserted an Arabic word into her speech, then upon returning to the US she noticed Spanish lingerings in her English. Linda recounted an experience the same week as our interview when she had tried to speak in French with a Hatian-American friend with whom she often spoke in French, but the Swahili phrase "*sijui*," or "I don't know," came out. I, somewhat like Bill, (but in less of an immersion situation) have gone back and forth between Spanish-language environments and Japanese environments over the past 15 years or so. I spent many years studying Spanish, then Japanese (including a year at a Japanese university,) at which point Spanish words or word order would occasionally slide into my Japanese speech. Then, while teaching in a bilingual Spanish/English elementary school, Japanese words or endings found their way into my Spanish. Going from that Los Angeles school to Nagoya was another switch that facilitated Spanish lingerings in my Japanese. Now Japanese lingerings – but not Spanish – appear in my English.

I commented once to a friend many years ago, semi-facetiously, that I would accidentally mix up Spanish and Japanese because "my brain was split in two halves: the English half and the everything-else-half." If I needed English, it was not usually a problem, but the rest was all thrown

in to the other side, so you never knew what would come out, but at best it would be what had entered most recently because it was still "on top." Interestingly, many participants' speculations regarding their own idiosyncratic and unintentional language patterns were very similar. There appeared to be a theme of "playing catch-up." Bob speculated,

Example V

> "My stupid brain says something like 'this is a foreign language you know a little bit of' so the most recent one pops out instead of the appropriate one..." (Whereas French was clearly his strongest non-English language,) "...I think I was used to speaking the previous language, and even if I wasn't very good at it, I was certainly better at it than the one I'd only been hearing for the last week or the last month."

Linda seemed to agree, observing,

Example W

> "My brain was switching into speaking another language and Swahili was the last one I'd spoken in a while."

Summary

This exploration has provided significant evidence that adult, professional expatriates do have difficulty readjusting to life in the US after reentry. These difficulties are cultural, emotional, behavioral and linguistic. There are many situations in which a lingering feature of the host culture's behavioral norms or language will manifest itself subconsciously and unintentionally in the behavior of the repatriot. Question 3 asked if there were any patterns to be deciphered in these behaviors. There were many patterns noted, as I will outline below:

Regarding Question 1: (Upon repatriation, do re-entrants catch themselves unintentionally displaying "foreign" communicative behaviors, either verbal or non-verbal? If so, what are they?)

The data clearly showed many different examples of unintentional verbal and nonverbal lingerings. Linguistic lingerings are evident in lexical insertions, including intensifiers, set phrases, emotional expressions and backchanneling. Paralinguistic features such as body language and intonation were also evident. Many lexical lingerings occurred because they were "handy," some of which also carried connotations that could not be found in English.

Regarding Question 2: (Do these re-entrants ever consider other people's displays of "home culture" communication style to be strange?)

Re-entrants also expressed surprise and uncertainty about how to interact with other Americans upon returning home. Newly accepted (foreign) norms of behavior yielded new expectations for interpersonal interactions. In addition, many returnees expressed emotional responses to changed perceptions of different features of American life, particularly a sense of being overwhelmed and easily distracted.

Regarding Question 3: (If such altered behaviors and perceptions do manifest themselves upon repatriation, what are the re-entrants' beliefs about why this seems to happen?)

According to the participants, these changes appear to be related to the level of acculturation attained while abroad, and many could have a correlation to how much the sojourner enjoyed his time abroad and appreciated the host culture(s) and language(s). The linguistic lingerings often seemed to be displayed in interactions in which there were heightened emotions, such as tension or excitement, and there was a visible pattern discerning which languages lingeringed at which times, primarily "one step behind," in the chain of international moves made by a person, as Bob noted.

The participants did not indicate a feeling of being unable to identify former (i.e. pre-original move) behavior norms as a cause for readjustment difficulties. On the contrary, many expressed disbelief at the way they used to think and behave, as if to indicate that it was the values, not simply rote behaviors, that had been "replaced" while overseas. The "automaticity" of many behaviors was regularly cited as cause for why they still lingered.

Limitations

Naturally, this is an exploratory study and has many limitations. First, there were only seven participants, of similar cultural and professional backgrounds (although they all went to very culturally divergent countries), so a larger and more varied sample group may yield considerably different—or confirming—results.

Methodologically, although I asked each participant similarly phrased questions in the beginning of the interview, many interpreted them differently, giving me completely different kinds of input that I hadn't previously considered. Some of this was insightful, and it may have proven informative to have a second formal follow-up interview with each person to present these new angles to them and see how they responded. On the other hand, it also added some confusion to the conversation on occasion. For example, as was seen in (I), Fr. James had originally dismissed backchanneling as irrelevant to my study because he had considered it to be "non-verbal," and later corrected me, commenting "well, that's not linguistic," at which point I realized he had thought I was only looking for dictionary-type lexical items.

Similarly, in an attempt to not restrict answers, I deliberately did not offer any of my own experiences as examples to help facilitate recall. This inadvertently allowed for off-topic stories and tangents requiring regular conversational repair, and lessened the number of directly applicable data due to time constraints, etc. (again, as in (I).) Later in most interviews I decided to share some of my own experiences, which were inevitably met with, "Oh! Well if you want to talk about that stuff..." (as Father James remarked), and similar responses. This indicated to me that the objectives of my initial questions were not as immediately obvious as I had thought. In future studies, the approach should be modified to account for—and ideally avoid—such discrepancies.

Of course the methodological question of the validity of self-report must also be revisited. To compensate for potential inaccuracies due most likely to the amount of time lapsed between the actual experience and the interviews, it might be helpful to contact new participants right before their repatriation or very soon thereafter, asking them to keep a journal of their readjustment experiences for several months. This would help close the possible gap between what participants think they do versus what they actually experience. The question would remain whether or not to tell them the specific kinds of details the study would be looking for, so as not to influence their behavior through the power of suggestion and create self-fulfilling prophecies, so to speak.

Future studies also might delve further into the relationship between these lingerings and communicative competence, exploring the effects of L2 on L1 knowledge. This could be approached from the angle of the contexts in which these lingerings happen, analyzing what speech acts and events are most commonly affected and why, since it does not appear that the identity of the hearer has much bearing on whether or not they occur. A comparative study could also look for potential similarities in the communicative lingerings of a group of sojourners returning from the same country (e.g. Japan) and the interlanguage development patterns of Japanese-L1 learners of English.

Conclusion

Some possible implications for foreign/second language instruction can be taken from this. As Fr. James explained:

Example X

> "...because speaking in a language is a reflection of a world view, it also affected my thinking patterns."

This is akin to the principle of linguistic relativity (Whorf 1956), particularly by the use of the word "reflection." While there are many people

who have criticized the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in its stronger forms, most would likely agree that a language is a representative symbol of culture, while simultaneously being reinforced by it (Kramsch 1998).

As language teachers, we need to recognize the immeasurable influence that a natural context has on socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic development. Studying how to use a language grammatically is moot if a learner cannot perceive the "world view" that the language reflects. The fact that these "lingerings" occur so automatically in certain patterns and contexts lends credence to the notion that a language must be "felt" to be truly learned. While it would be impossible to instruct students directly on how to respond in every possible scenario, there must be a way to incorporate as much natural, pragmatic stimulus and feedback as possible during instruction. This will be necessary to avoid continued frustration through mere memorization and futile attempts to mechanically apply rules, ideally enabling learners to more naturally acquire cross-cultural communicative competence in their new language.

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Appendix A: Participant* Profiles

1. Laura:
   Countries lived in: Japan
   Language/proficiency: Japanese/comfortably proficient; Spanish/fluent
   Time frame: August, 1999 – July 2001 (2 years)
   Occupation: English teacher

2. Susan:
   Countries lived in: United Arab Emirates (2 years), Mexico (4 years)
   Language/proficiency: Arabic/none; Spanish/conversationally functional
   Time frame: 1996 – 2001 (6 years)
   Occupation: English teacher

3. Pat:
   Countries lived in: Japan
   Language/proficiency: Japanese/minimally functional; French/conversant
   Time frame: October, 2000 – November, 2001 (1 year)
   Occupation: English teacher

4: Bob:
   Countries lived in: Ivory Coast, Ecuador, Somalia, Egypt, Thailand, and the UAE.
   Language/proficiency: Standard French and West African Pidgin French/fluent;
   Spanish/comfortable; Arabic/conversationally functional;
   Thai/minimally functional
   Time frame: 1970 – 2001 (30 years)
   Occupation: English teacher

5. Linda:
   Countries lived in: Tanzania
   Language/proficiency: Swahili/conversationally proficient; French/fluent
   Time frame: June, 2000 – May, 2001 (1 year)
   Occupation: English teacher, Catholic services volunteer

6: Father James:
   Countries lived in: Papua New Guinea
   Language/proficiency: Kewa/conversant; Pidgin/fluent
   Time frame: January, 1998 – August, 2001 (3_ years)
   Occupation: Catholic priest/missionary

7. Jordan:
   Countries lived in: Zimbabwe, Egypt
   Language/proficiency: Shona/minimally functional; Arabic/minimally functional
   Time frame: January, 2001 – December 2001 (1 year)
   Occupation: Administrative worker for group providing assistance to victims of torture

* All names have been changed except for the author's.

Appendix B: Lexical Lingerings

Category	Utterance[a]	Language	US English Meaning[b]	Literal Translation[c]	Examples
1. Intensifier	*Kabisa*	Swahili		really/very	*"Safi Kabisa."* (Very cool.
	Auwi	Arabic		very	"That was really stupid *auwi*."
	Lazzm	Arabic		must	
2. Set Phrases					
(a)With English Equivalent	*Blungwunum*	Kewa		why	*"Blungwunum?"*
	Una cerveza	Spanish		a beer	*"Una cerveza."*
	Si	Spanish		yes	*"Si."*
	No	Spanish		no	*"No."*
	Queue	British English		line	*"Queue* up."
	Mm	Japanese		yes	*"Mm.* Right."
	Un-n	Japanese		no	*"Un-n,* no..."
	Usiku mwema	Swahili		good morning	*"Usiku mwema."*
	Sijui	Swahili		I don't know	*"Sijui."*
(b) With no fitting lexical equivalent	*Hodi*	Swahili	I'm here/I'm coming	?	*"Hodi! Hodi!"*
	Inshala	Arabic	God willing		*"Inshala,* Teacher, *inshala."*
	Abunanagio	Kewa	(term of endearment)	my little son	*"Ah, abunanagio"*
	Karibu	Swahili	?	welcome	*"Karibu* (chair)" – "Have a seat." *"Karibu* (food)" – "Help yourself."
	Sinikiza	Swahili	Accompany someone out	escort	"I'll *sinikiza* you to the car."

Category	Utterance[a]	Language	US English Meaning[b]	Literal Translation[c]	Examples
3. Emotional Expressions	*Hijole*	Spanish	son of a gun, holy cow		*"Hijole*, what is he..."
	Aram	Arabic	God forbid!; awful		*"Haram"*
	Humdilila	Arabic	Thank god!		*"Humdilila."*
	Safi	Swahili	cool (colloquial)!		*"Safi Kabisa!"*
	Dwana	Swahili	oh man!		*"Dwana!"* (at another driver)
	Are	Japanese	Huh? Wait a minute...		*"Are?* Where's the ...?" (self talk)
4. Backchanneling	*Tayib*	Arabic	okay, very good		
	Yahreit	Arabic	oh (light surprise)	a little bit	
	Is it?	British English	Really?		
	HeeeEEEh?	Japanese	Really?		
	UhhOOOhhh	Kewa	disagreement, disapproval		
	Mmm, mm	Japanese	uh-huh, yeah		
	Ah	(various)	oh		

[a] As pronounced by participant. [b] As described by participant when translation is not clear. [c] As told by participant.

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